



**PUBLIC WORKS: A MULTI-COMPONENT PORTFOLIO
OF PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

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Portfolio of Research Outputs

This multi-component output consists of a selection of approaches to the creation and dissemination of art in the public realm. These works were realised across a six-year period (June 2014 to August 2020) and incorporate multiple forms – permanent public works ('Alight', Cardiff, and 'Wassail', London), public performance ('God So Loves Decay', Luton and L.A., 'Metal Militia', Berwick-upon-Tweed, 'It All Began with Richard Burton', Whitstable), and site-specific graphic works ('Even in Exile' album cover, 'The Murenger and Other Stories' book cover). This diverse approach to ideas of site and the public realm reflects my research interests in an artwork's capacity to exist autonomously and coherently outside of any additional framework for its designation as an artwork.

From a practice-based research perspective, a key question these projects examined was:

- How can an artwork co-opt the physical surroundings in which it is sited in order to intensify the viewer experience and extend its dialogues beyond that of simply being considered an artwork?

The key methodology was in the creation and the dissemination of the works and artistic objects themselves – through this process a physical space was created in which the identified research question could be examined, individually, and then collectively as part of the wider portfolio.

In submitting these works as a multi-component output, it provides an accurate reflection of my interest and research in to working in this way. I am equally interested in permanent public works – how they function, their relation to architecture and people's use of the space, their ability to engage in a wider narrative – as I am in the transient use of space or the co-option of recognisable sites; the shorthand of understanding this can create for an audience, that extends beyond a visual arts audience, when introducing a work in to that site or space.

Research Outcomes and Narrative

Key connections between these works, and the reason to present them as a portfolio, are their engagement with site and audience. Whilst diverse in their media, scale and approach, each represents part of my ongoing practice-based research in to the relationship between site, audience and artwork; how these three things triangulate in the activation of an artwork and, very particularly, an artwork's ability to function autonomously outside of a formally acknowledged visual arts arena and space for exhibition.

This portfolio consists of the following works, presented in chronological order:

- Metal Militia (2014)
- It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)
- Alight (2014)
- God So Loves Decay (2016)
- Wassail (2018)
- The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
- Even in Exile (2020)

Due to the nature of public works and their presentation it is almost impossible to collate accurate audience/viewer numbers. Where any of the projects contain a tangible metric – such as an on-line video or ticket sales – I have included those numbers.

Metal Militia (2014)

Public performance. Commissioned by Berwick Visual Arts.

This was a live, public, performance that consisted of pipers from the Berwick RBL & Eyemouth RBL Pipe Bands playing traditional piping tunes, accompanied on the drums by Nicholas Barker – one of the world's leading extreme metal drummers – playing original drumbeats he had written for the performance. The work developed from research undertaken in the town, focusing primarily on its military history and the former residence of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers regiment. The one-off performance took place on Friday 6th June 2014 at The Maltings, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, in front of a live audience. The performance had been promoted equally, and without bias, to an arts audience – through the venue – and also a rock/heavy metal audience – using a specialist rock and heavy metal marketing/promotion company.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/metal-militia>

Video Clip – 3mins

<https://vimeo.com/97860566>

Full Performance – 25mins

<https://vimeo.com/99119101>

Further Evidence/Information

Host venue information:

<http://www.berwickvisualarts.co.uk/whats-on/35/s-mark-gubb-metal-militia>

<https://www.maltingsberwick.co.uk/events/visual/1494>

Blabbermouth blog feature:

<https://www.blabbermouth.net/news/former-dimmu-borgircradle-of-filth-drummer-nicholas-barker-in-unique-musical-collaboration/>

Guardian Guide preview:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/may/30/the-weeks-art-shows-in-pictures>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Audience on the night:	50
Blue Bonnets – Video clip:	22,400
Full Performance – Video clip:	424



Metal Militia (2014)
Images from the performance at The Maltings, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Friday 6th June, 2014
Image credits Mark Pinder

It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)

Public performance. Commissioned by The Whitstable Biennale

This was a one-off live event that took the form of a guided coach tour along the North Kent Coast, from Whitstable to Ramsgate. The coach tour was based on my own recollections of growing up on this coast – a mixture of autobiography, local knowledge, gossip and hearsay – an informal and conversational unpacking of my relationship with the place where I grew up. The performance was developed out of an essay I wrote for the fourth of issue of the publication 'Uncle Chop Chop', which is commissioned and compiled by the artists Beagles and Ramsay.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/richard-burton>

Video version of original essay text – 9mins

<https://vimeo.com/73441809>

Further Evidence/Information

Host organisation information:

<https://whitstablebiennale.com/project/it-all-began-with-richard-burton/>

Guardian Guide preview:

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/jun/14/this-weeks-new-events>

Uncle Chop Chop publication:

<http://www.unclechopchop.com/4th%20edition.htm>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Audience on the coach: 50

Video clip: 95

Alight (2014)

Permanent public sculpture. Commissioned by Stoford Ltd and Admiral PLC for Cardiff city centre.

‘Alight’ was commissioned to be sited alongside the newly built Admiral Insurance offices in Cardiff city centre. The brief was simply to develop a permanent sculptural piece for the site. I was interested in the architecture of the site, both in terms of its history – or lack of it, as the entire area had been redeveloped – and also its position within the city – this area could be described as an entertainment district, housing a cinema, a live music arena, shops, restaurants and bars. Also, where the work was sited was, formerly, not an area of high footfall due to it being at the back of a shopping centre.

Through this work I was proposing a conversation between it and the very large architecture that surrounded it, at the same time attempting to create a landmark and reference point in people’s navigation of the city.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/alight>

Further Evidence/Information

Cardiff TV Interview/Feature:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_0UnA_kWy4

Admiral TV Interview/Feature:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etJ1N4Y4heA>

BBC News Article:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-30316587>

a-n The Artist’s Information Company News Article:

<https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/lightening-bolt-strikes-cardiff-city-centre/>

Wales Online News Article:

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/bolt-blue-new-33ft-lightning-8237195>

Architects Journal Feature (scroll down):

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/astagal-welcome-to-cambridges-latin-quarter>

Your Sculpture – Sculptural Heritage Project:

<https://yoursculpture.wordpress.com/tag/wales/>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Cardiff TV video: 68

Admiral TV video: 286

This work has also featured in two BBC programmes that I am aware of, and one Welsh tourism advert.



Alight (2014) - Permanent public work sited in Cardiff (UK) city centre
Image credit Jamie Woodley

God So Loves Decay (2016)
Public Performance. Commissioned by Sunridge Avenue Projects,
Luton.

This was a one-off performance in Luton Town centre that took place on Saturday 4th May 2016. The work consisted of punk musician, Russ Crimewave, 'preaching' the collected lyrics of Luton-based post-punk band, UK Decay. The site of the performance was outside of Luton Town Hall; a town hall burned to the ground in the Peace Day riots of 1919, and a regular site for a range of religious preachers. For around 4 hours, Russ preached from a specially printed publication containing UK Decay's collected lyrics. Free copies of the publication were available for distribution to the passing audience. The work was commissioned by Sunridge Avenue Projects, which was a 9-month programme of arts activity that happened across Luton, commissioned and curated by the artist Dominic Allan a.k.a Dominic from Luton. This work was then re-presented at the '*Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method*' conference at UCLA, Los Angeles, in February 2018.

Further documentation and audio recordings
<https://www.smarkgubb.com/god-so-loved-decay>

Further Evidence/Information

'Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method' conference information:
<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/resources/curating-resistance-punk-as-archival-method/>



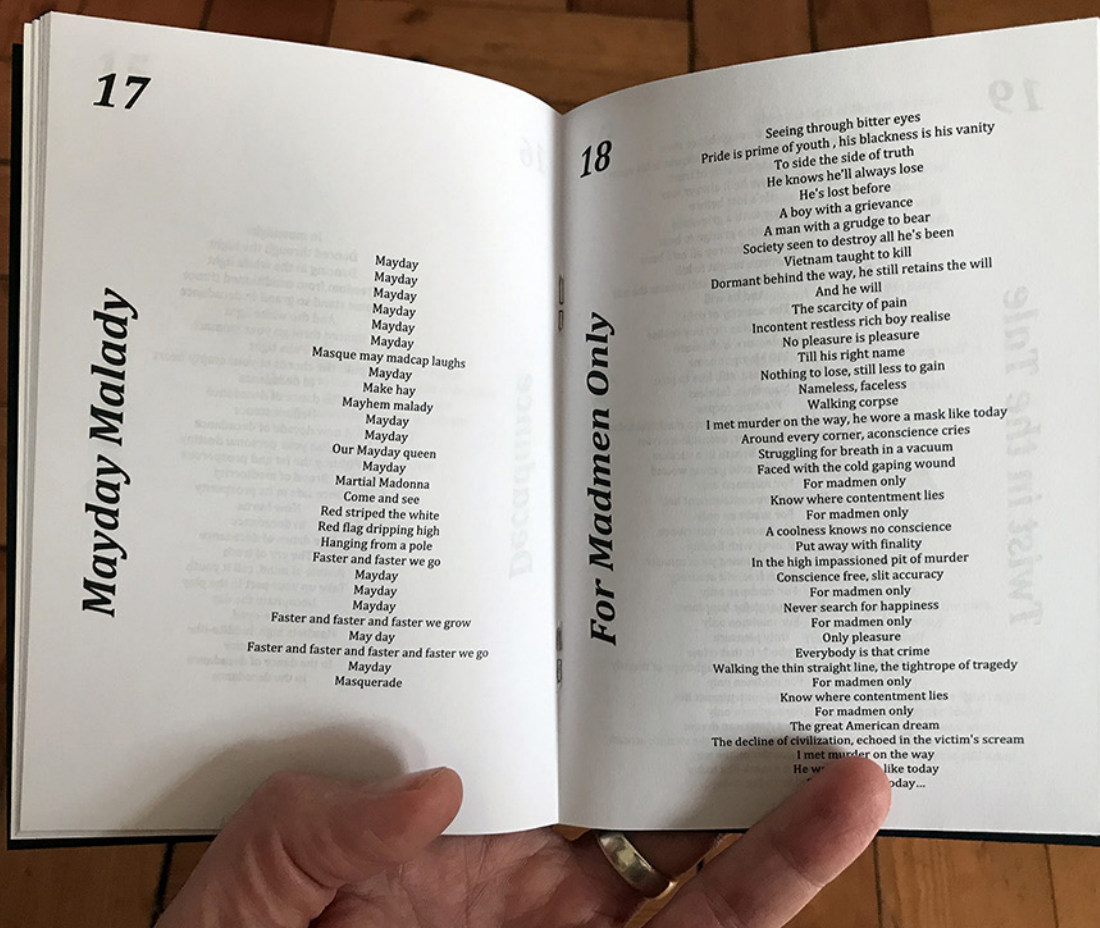
God So Loves Decay (2016)
Image from the performance, Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May, 2016



God So Loves Decay (2016)
 Images from the performance, Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May, 2016



Pages from the free publication distributed during the performance,
God So Loves Decay (2016), Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May, 2016



Pages from the free publication distributed during the performance,
God So Loves Decay (2016), Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May, 2016



Re-presentation of the performance *God So Loves Decay* (2016)
at *Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method* conference, UCLA,
Los Angeles, Saturday 10th February, 2018

Wassail (2018)

Permanent public sculpture. Commissioned by Berkeley Homes.

Commissioned by Berkeley Homes to be sited around their 'Vista' development on the Nine Elms, Battersea, the specific focus of the commission was to create way markers for the site. The logic to my approach was that anything can act as a way marker – a tree-stump, a bent lamppost – essentially anything that's specific and unique to a site. Seven works were developed for the site, to be set in to the hardscaping at specific points, each of which was thematically developed from research in to the history of the borough. An eighth work was also commissioned to be sited on a railway arch at the rear of the site. This was developed, thematically, from the same research that was undertaken in to the history of the borough. The specific things being referenced through the works are:

- Battersea formerly being a lavender-farming area, pre-industrial revolution.
- Pink Floyd's classic 'Animals' album cover, featuring a pig flying between the chimneys of Battersea Power Station (which is directly to the rear of the site).
- The work of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.
- The formation of the Workers Educational Association in a terraced house in the borough in 1903.
- The aviation history of the Short Brothers, formerly based on the gasworks the rear of the Vista site.
- The filming of The Clash's 'London Calling' video on a pier of Battersea Park.
- The presence of the 'Pleasure Gardens' in Battersea Park during the 1951 'Festival of Britain'.
- The discovery of the Seax of Beagnoth in the River Thames at Battersea – a 9th Century Anglo-Saxon knife containing the only known complete inscription of the twenty-eight letter Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/wassail>

Further Evidence/Information

Berkeley Homes Cultural Strategy:

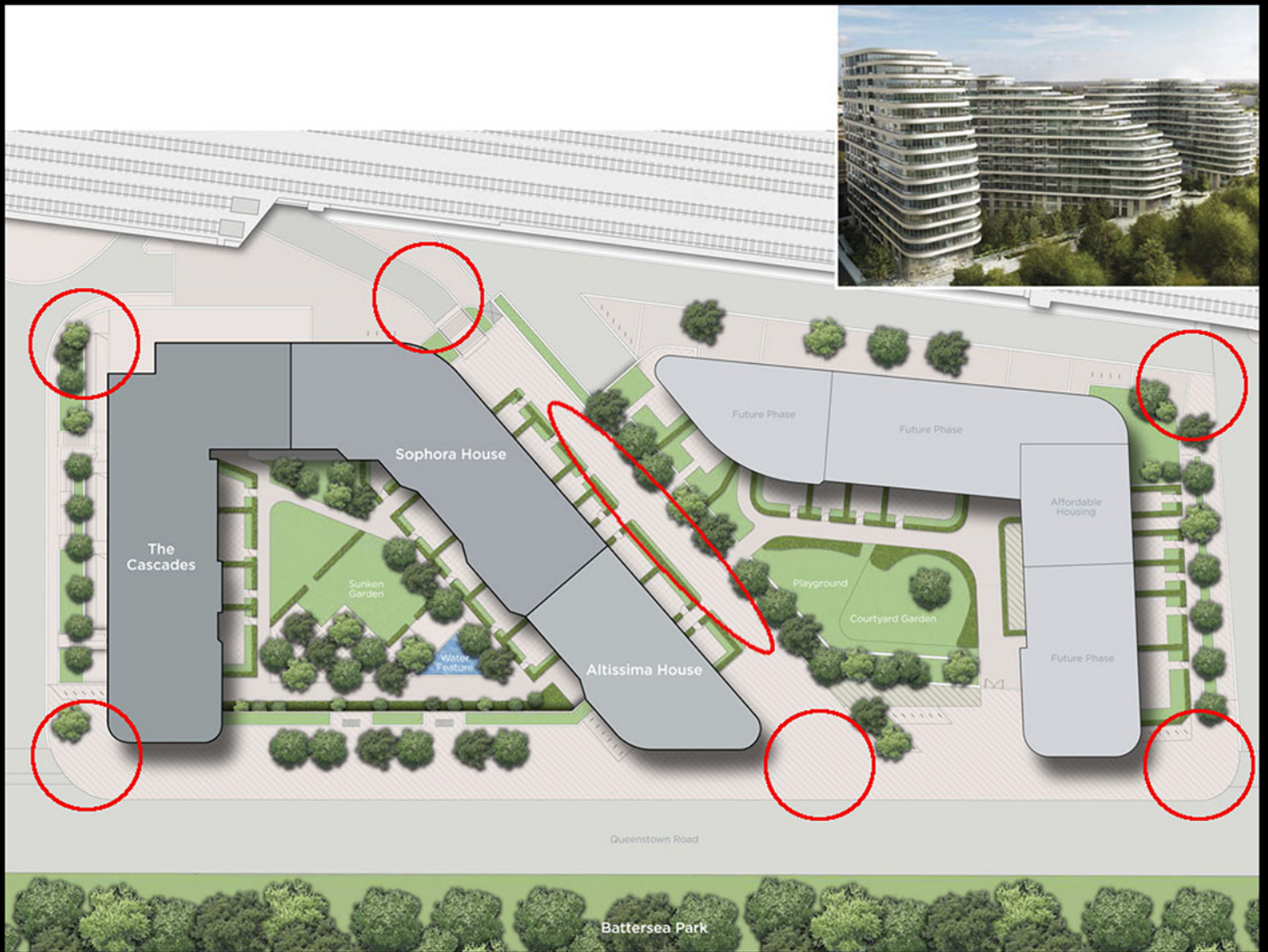
<https://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/media/pdf/e/r/Cultural-Strategy-Info.pdf>

Nine Elms London 'Winter Highlights':

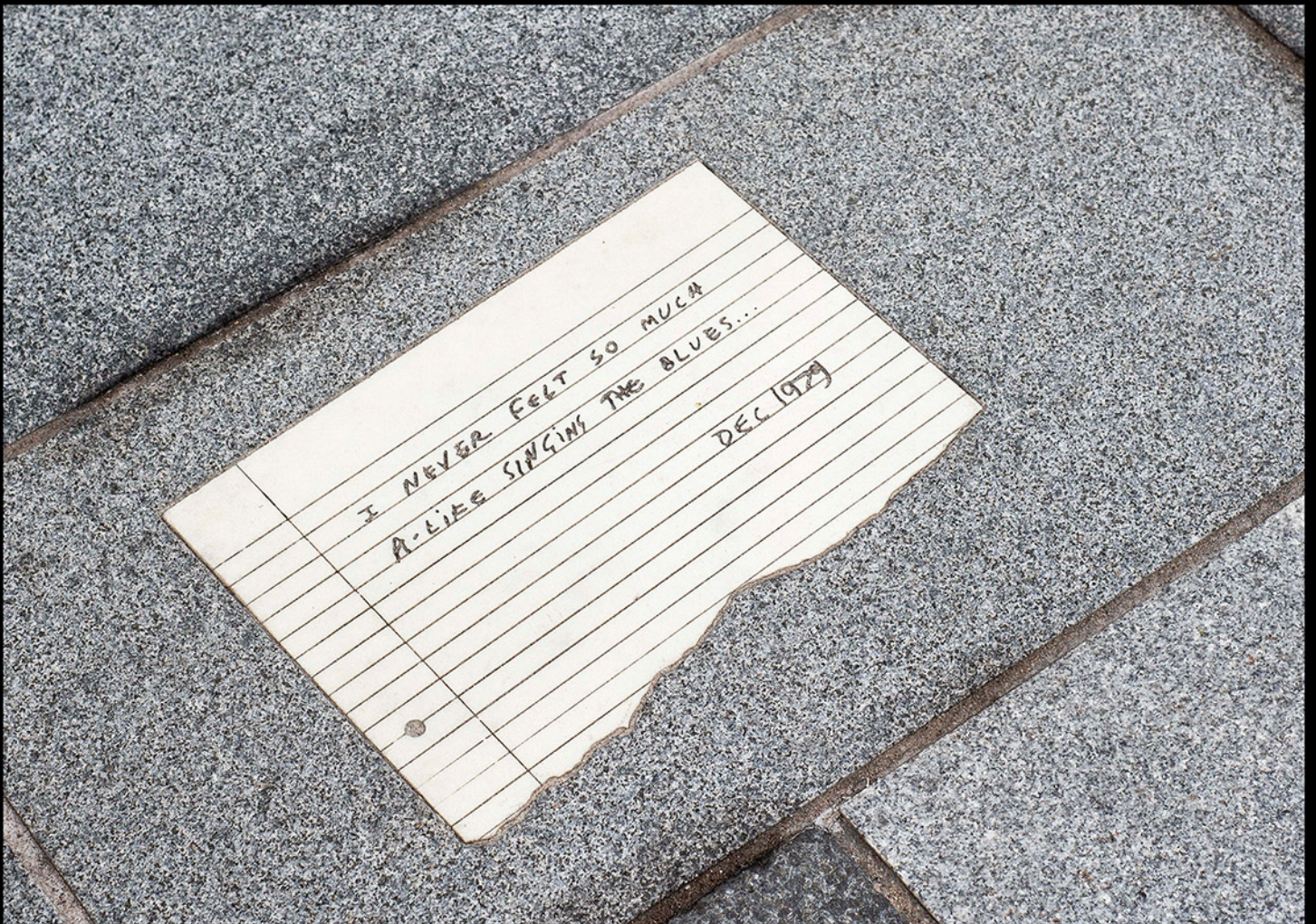
<https://nineelmslondon.com/features/highlights-from-winter-in-nine-elms/>

Public Talk Event/Information:

<https://nineelmslondon.com/events/winter/up-project-artist-commissions-launch-event-in-nine-elms/>



Positions of the seven works set in to the hardscaping around the Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London (2018)



Singin' the Blues (2018)
Laser-etched white marble set in to a granite plank, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



Pleasure Gardens (2018)
Engraved text in granite plank, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



Weight of the Stone (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite planks, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



A Dog Needs a Home (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite planks and dog paw prints in concrete slab, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



Balloons for Sale (2018)
Engraved granite blocks, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



2s 6d (2018)
1903 coins set in granite slab, Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



Lavender (2018)
Neon and powder-coated metal case,
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London



Wassail (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite plank,
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London

The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
Site-specific graphic work. Commissioned by Jon Gower and the Three
Impostors publishers.

This was an invitation from the writer, Jon Gower, to make a series of works in response to the content of a new collection of short stories, which would then be sited on the cover and inside the book. Very specifically, the invitation was not to 'illustrate' the book, but to take it as a point of influence or research, in the same way I would develop a work in response to any other proposed site or point of reference. Ultimately, this took the form of digital drawing on the front cover and a series of photographs that were introduced alongside each of the stories inside the book.

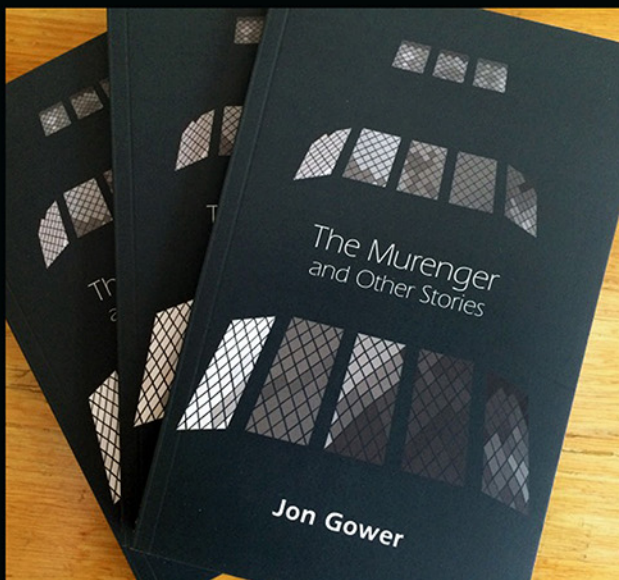
Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/murenger>

Further Evidence/Information

Three Impostors Website:

<https://www.threeimpostors.co.uk/THE-MURENGER-AND-OTHER-STORIES>



The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
Original cover illustration and in-situ as the printed book cover



The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
Original photo works (L) and in-situ inside the book (R)

Even in Exile (2020)

Site-specific graphic work. Commissioned by James Dean Bradfield and Orchard Records.

Similar to the invitation for 'The Murenger and Other Stories', this was an invitation from the musician James Dean Bradfield (Manic Street Preachers) to develop artwork that could be used for the cover of a solo album he had written inspired by Victor Jara; a Chilean musician and political activist who was murdered in the first days following the Pinochet coup d'état. Beyond that, the invitation was extended to include the design and layout for all elements of each format of the release – vinyl LP, CD and tape; the covers, the lyric sheets, and booklets, the case inserts, the CD/tape/vinyl stickers etc. This allowed me to approach these spaces as a site through which I could consider the entire visual experience of the audience.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/even-in-exile>

Further Evidence/Information

The Guardian – James Dean Bradfield Interview – featuring images of engraved guitar:

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/jul/26/james-dean-bradfield-im-not-sure-musicians-telling-people-who-to-vote-for-helps>

The Guardian – 'Even in Exile' Review – featuring images of wall engraving/painting and engraved guitar:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/reviews/james-dean-bradfield-review-even-exile-manic-street-preachers-a9667226.html>

Q Magazine – 'Even in Exile' Review – featuring images of wall engraving/painting and engraved guitar:

<https://archive.org/details/q-magazine-august-2020-user-upload.-net/page/106/mode/2up>

Manic Street Preachers Web store:

<https://store.manicstreetpreachers.com/>

Tangible Audience Metrics

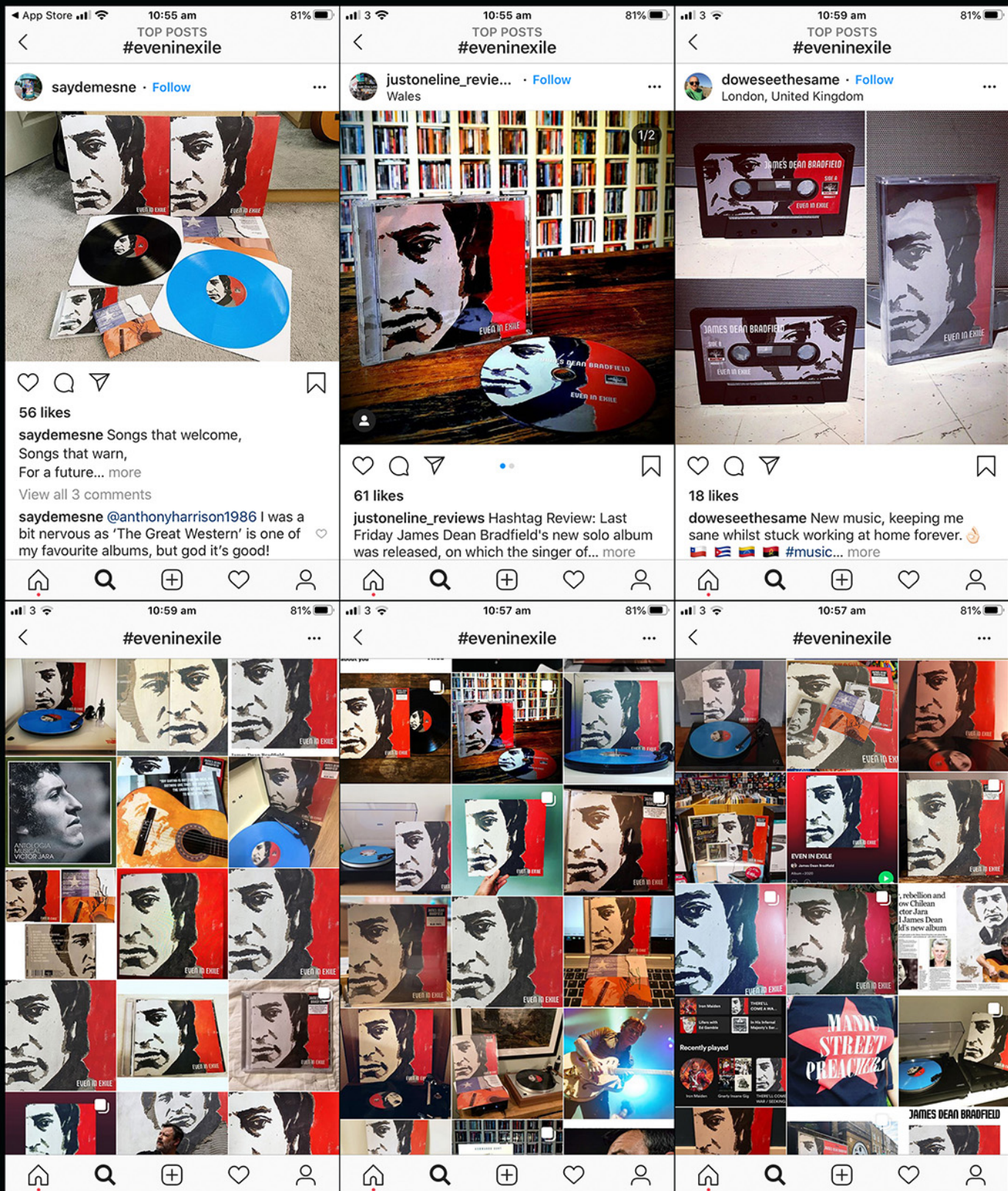
Physical copies of the album sold (all formats):	8000 approx.
Q Magazine circulation:	44,050
Observer circulation:	110,438
The Guardian circulation:	140,100



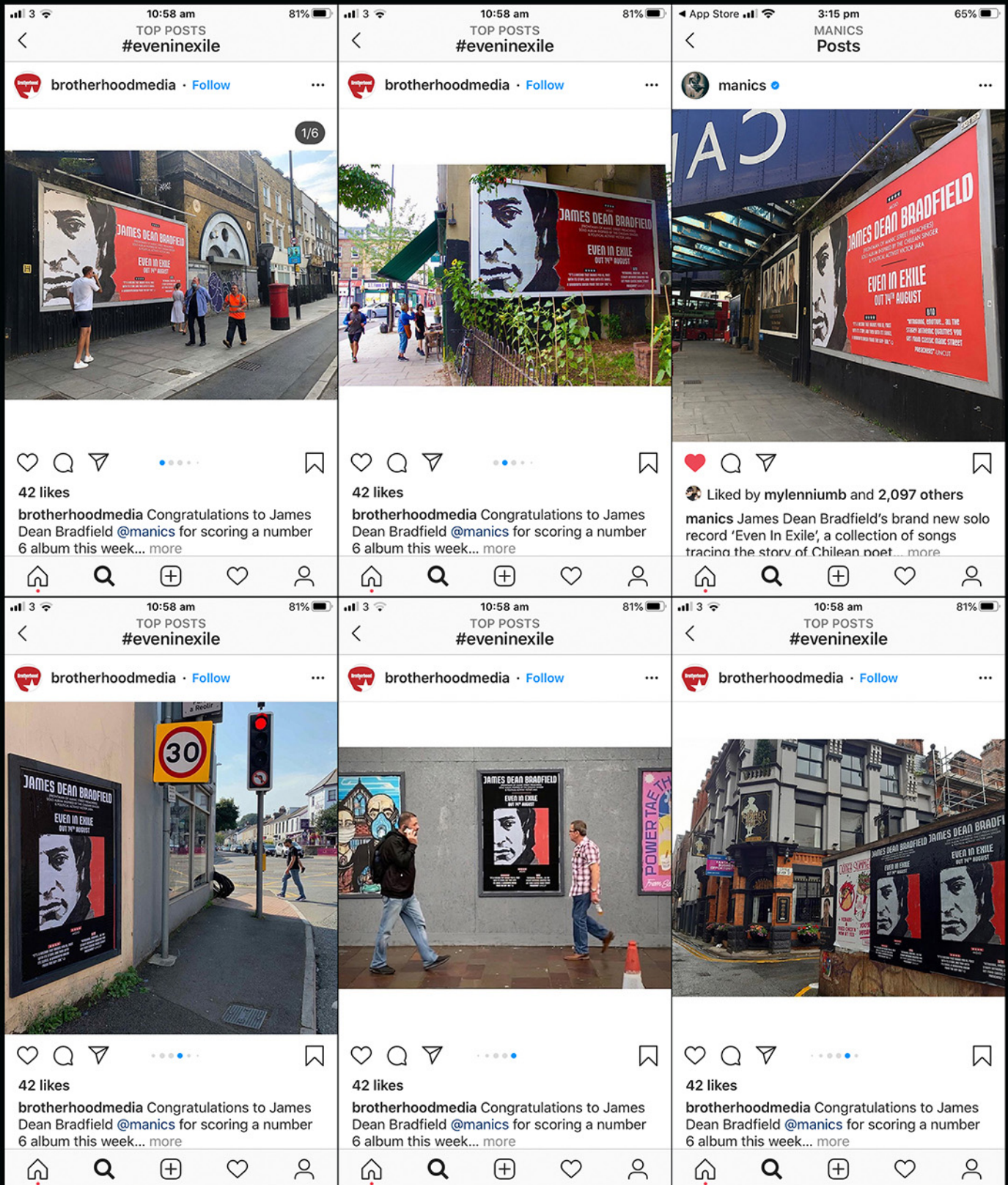
Portrait of Victor Jara carved and painted on concrete wall (2020)
Original artwork created for James Dean Bradfield's *Even in Exile* album cover design



Hand-engraved portrait of Victor Jara on Spanish guitar (2020)
Original artwork created for James Dean Bradfield's *Even in Exile* album cover design



Even in Exile (2020)
Screenshots from a range of public Instagram accounts



Even in Exile (2020)
Promotional materials installed at various UK sites

